

In preparing to protect this country, the administration should not give the Department of Defense authority to put at risk the environment that Americans cherish and the clean and healthy communities it demands. As the largest owner of infrastructure in the world, and sadly, as the biggest polluter, the Department of Defense should be setting the best example, not getting permission from Congress to cut corners on the protection of the environment and the health of our community. We should be working together in these troubled times to make our community healthy, safe, and economically secure.

TAX CUTS AFFECT NEW JERSEY PROGRAMS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, this week, probably tomorrow and Thursday, we will probably have a final vote Thursday on the Republican budget resolution in the House; and I wanted to speak to that resolution today because I think it really sets a terrible precedent for where we are going in terms of spending programs, tax cuts, as well as the economy in general, which as we all know has experienced a major downturn in the last year or so.

My major point is this, that essentially what the President is doing, what the Republicans are doing in this budget is to give huge tax cuts, primarily to wealthy Americans and to corporate interests. As a result of that, there will be a major slash of programs that are important to the average American and also a major increase in the deficit. A few years ago under President Clinton we actually had a surplus with the budget. We were paying down our debt. We were paying back the Social Security and Medicare trust funds. Now the opposite is happening.

With this Republican budget, which the President essentially supports, we are building huge deficits once again. We are borrowing from the Social Security trust fund. We are borrowing from the Medicare trust fund. And those two retirement security programs, basically Social Security and Medicare, the day when they will go broke or will run out of funds will come closer and closer because of the drain on those trust funds and their resources.

But, Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to see that over the weekend, in fact Sunday, in the New York Times there was an editorial that basically says how I feel with regard to the Republican budget and gives some information of which I would like to read certain sections.

It is entitled, "How Tax Cuts Trickle Down." In the beginning it says, Mr.

Speaker, "In a sorry effort to protect President Bush's tax cut mania, the Republican leaders of Congress have unveiled proposals for slashing the most basic government programs for years to come. With rationalizations running from tragic to ludicrous, House budgeteers envision cuts of \$470 billion in Medicare, Medicaid, education, child care and other vital programs, from transportation to health care, the environment, to science research." And it goes on. And I will go back and give other sections of it, Mr. Speaker.

But I just wanted to give Members an idea of how these Republican cuts in the budget would specifically affect my State of New Jersey. And keep in mind that the only reason these cuts are being made is to pay for tax cuts to wealthy Americans and corporate interests.

An analysis of the President's budget shows drastic cuts in critical services in New Jersey; and the terrifying fact is that the House Republican budget approved last week in the committee, which we will be voting on tomorrow or Thursday, is even worse than the President's budget in this respect in what it slashes.

In New Jersey, the President's budget cuts \$9.9 million for after-school programs leaving 14,110 children without after-school services through the 21st Century Community Learning Center's program. The President's budget cuts \$1.8 million in teacher-quality funding for New Jersey and cuts funds nationally for grants to improve teacher quality by \$80 million.

Now this is the President who has said that no child should be left behind. The President's budget cuts more than \$27 million in Federal highway funding for New Jersey. The President's budget slashes clean water funding for New Jersey by more than \$20 million this year.

This is so important to my district because my district is primarily along the shore, along the ocean, the Raritan Bay and the Raritan River; and we are dependent on this Federal funding to keep our waters clean and for sewage treatment.

The President's budget cuts more than \$3 million in low-income home energy assistance for New Jerseyans and the President's budget cuts more than \$4 million in community service block grants which provide local organizations the funds to help reduce poverty, revitalize low-income communities, and provide families with the help they need to become fully self-sufficient.

Now, I could go on and on, Mr. Speaker; but I do not want to keep stressing what is happening in my home State, but I have to say that this is happening all over the country.

Now, why are we doing this? Well, the President says it is because of tax cuts. And if I could go back to the New York Times, they say, "The estimated shortfall," this is the deficit now, "of \$2.7 trillion could have been an \$890 bil-

lion surplus but for the Bush proposal, according to the Congressional Budget Office."

So the fact of the matter is, the reason we will have a deficit because of the President's budget is because of tax cuts. The next \$1.4 trillion cut geared to the affluent will average \$80,000 a year for millionaires. So what we are seeing, Mr. Speaker, is primarily we are going into deficit and slashing these programs to pay for tax cuts for the wealthy. The President has suggested otherwise, but there is another New York Times article that gives the specifics and I just wanted to read it to you.

It says, "The average tax cut is over \$1,000," this is what the President is saying, "because a few rich taxpayers would get such large reductions." For example, for households with incomes over \$200,000, the average tax cut is \$12,000; but if you are making less money, you will get about \$300.

HONORING FRANCISCO JAVIER BLANCO

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Puerto Rico (Mr. ACEVEDO-VILÁ) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. ACEVEDO-VILÁ. Mr. Speaker, I am here today to recognize Mr. Francisco Javier Blanco, a man whose commitment and service to Puerto Rico and the environment has resulted in countless achievements and a legacy that will last for generations.

Mr. Blanco recently retired as director of the Conservation Trust of Puerto Rico. During his more than 30 years of dedicated service, Mr. Blanco was responsible for guiding the conservation trust through its formation stage and into the impressive organization that exists today.

The Conservation Trust of Puerto Rico, which was created in 1968 through a Memorandum of Understanding between the Interior Department and the Commonwealth Government, is now recognized as a leader among the Nation's land trusts in the area of environmental conservation and preservation.

Under Mr. Blanco's direction, the trust has protected 17,000 acres of land as reserves of incalculable natural, aesthetic, and cultural value. Thanks to the efforts of Mr. Blanco, the trust continues to make significant contributions to protect Puerto Rico's environment and important history. The efforts and commitment of Mr. Blanco have left a legacy for Puerto Rico to enjoy for generations to come, and for that we are grateful.

As Resident Commissioner, I am building upon the strong conservation and historic preservation efforts of Mr. Blanco.

□ 1245

The partnership between the Trust, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and

the United States Government has brought about important protection and restoration of limited resources on a small island, like Puerto Rico, with a high population density.

Last year, thanks to the support of my colleagues, I was able to designate portions of three rivers in Puerto Rico as wild and scenic. Soon I will introduce legislation that will protect, through a partnership between the Federal Government and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, critical water resources in the karst region of Puerto Rico. Furthermore, I will also introduce legislation to designate the El Toro Wilderness Area in the Caribbean National Forest, known in Puerto Rico as El Yunque. These efforts, I am proud to say, are of the spirit and dedication of Francisco Javier Blanco.

Mr. Speaker, I ask for the Chair's consideration in these endeavors, and hope to work with the bipartisan support in Congress to enact these bills into law.

THE PRESIDENT'S HEAD START PROPOSAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ADERHOLT). Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. RODRIGUEZ) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk briefly about the President's budget for 2004. One of the specific areas is the area of Head Start.

The President's budget introduced this new Head Start initiative and wages a war on the poor. The Head Start has been working great, despite the fact that we only have funds to represent and only give to about 40 percent of Americans that are out there that are in need. Yet he is choosing to take these resources and decided to put it on the block grant, when right now, on the local control basis, it has been working in a way, and all the studies indicate that the Head Start has been doing a great job.

The administration claims that his proposal will sharpen the focus on school readiness, improve teacher training and mandate a system to assess the success of Head Start programs in preparing children for school. The reality is it is already doing that. Why mess with it? It is a great program.

The intent is to send the money to the States. The reason we started the Head Start program is because the States have been negligent in providing early childhood education. The States have not been responsive in putting in the resources, and I will give my colleagues an example.

Texas, to this day, only funds half-day kindergartens. The rest of the local school districts have to come up with the local property tax in order to provide full-day kindergartens. So when we look at Head Start that has early childhood preparation, this is

where the resources need to be. They need to stay there. They have been doing a great job. Let us not mess with it.

In order to address what the administration suggests is uncoordinated efforts, he wants to give this to the Department of Health and Human Services, or take it away from that Department and give it to the Department of Education. The reason it has been with the Department of Health and Human Services is because Head Start is not only an educational program, but it has been there to reach out to the families of these youngsters and also work with them when it comes to the issue of health and providing that early education that is needed to help those parents also address those needs.

When we send that money to the Department of Education, I can already see they are going to be earmarking it to the existing programs that they have and not addressing the specific programs that this program was intended to do.

Under the President's plan, the transition would begin in 2004, and the Department of Education would assume full responsibilities for Head Start, and instead of having the local community do it, we would have 50 State agencies throughout this country with each State having the bureaucracy, and, of course, they would need 16 to 20 percent off the top in order to make that happen. Then they would be looking at providing those resources.

So we must ensure that Head Start continues to provide our children with comprehensive services and that it is strong for parental involvement and parental participation.

One of the key things that this program has resulted in is the studies show that those kids that show up at Head Start do a great deal better than the average youngster in the same category that is not under Head Start, and not only that, but they also found that they are less likely to drop out.

One of the realities is that youngsters who drop out, one of the characteristics is that they fail twice before they reach junior high, and one of the realities is that Head Start has helped them not to fall into that category of failing twice, and being able to get that, as the name implies, a head start in education.

One of the things that we do need to do is provide additional moneys for Head Start, because right now we are only providing 40 percent of those that are eligible to participate for this program, and there is a need for us to provide additional resources.

Besides trying to dismantle the Head Start program, the President also announced in his 2004 budget an increase of only \$148 million for Head Start. At the same time that he has identified education as one of his priorities, this is not sufficient money to be able to make this happen. Not only would this tiny increase not cover inflation and reach those kids that are needed in

Head Start, but it would also have to turn away over 1,200 children from the existing programs.

Questions must be asked as to the rationale for the initiative and for the transfer. Our concern is that we are transferring a program that has been working well under the Department of Health to another Department that has chosen not to address this problem, and who has chosen not to deal with early childhood education.

The President's 2004 budget proposal also includes legislative proposals to introduce an option available to all States to participate in alternative financing systems and in terms of grants, and so this initiative in terms of these grants are basically to take away from the existing program.

So I want to encourage the Members to really look closely at Head Start because it is a program that has been working. It is program that has been there for us, and we need to keep that up.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 51 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

Critical moments in the life of any person or any nation, as well as momentous undertakings, Lord God, bring us to our knees before You. We humbly seek Your guidance and rely on Your faithfulness. Be with us in the days and weeks ahead. Bless the Members of this Chamber, all who work here and our guests. Listen to our heartfelt prayers.

We seem to be entering a passageway of darkness which may fill us with fear and anxiety or move us forward with hope and expectation. Bring us safely to the light at the end of the tunnel. For Jews this may recall the Exodus; for Christians, cross and resurrection; for Muslims, a spiritual hijra. Only You, O Lord, can bring good out of evil and gift us with lasting peace; so we turn to You now and forever. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.